

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CCO-00
	INL-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	PDI-00	DS-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VCI-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
	CAC-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00
	ISN-00	OCS-00	NIMA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	P-00	ISNE-00
	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	USSS-00
	NCTC-00	ASDS-00	CBP-00	BBG-00	R-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00
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 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
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 AMCONSUL LAHORE  
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 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
 NSC WASHINGTON DC  
 CIA WASHINGTON DC  
 CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
 USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 002523

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2034  
 TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PK](#)  
 SUBJECT: TERRORISTS INCREASE ACTIVITY IN ADVANCE OF  
 WAZIRISTAN OPERATION

Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson. Reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (S) Summary: With the Pakistan military preparing to launch an operation against major terrorist safe havens in South Waziristan, Pakistan's terrorist/extremist groups have dramatically increased their militant and propaganda operations in an effort to undermine public support. On the operational side, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) now headed by an individual calling himself Hakeemullah Mehsud appears to be cooperating both with elements of al-Qaeda and with the Punjabi terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ). While this is not the first time that we have seen cross-cooperation among these terrorist/extremist organizations, the intensity of attacks -- five in a single day on October 15 -- indicate that TTP has both increased its cooperative outreach and its finances (as LJ does not work for free).

¶2. (S) In addition, the recent attacks demonstrate that TTP and its allies have the capacity to evolve and vary the style of their attacks to exploit weaknesses in the Pakistani security apparatus. The recent attacks involved both vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) in the North West Frontier Province and smaller attacks against high profile installations by armed individuals in security forces uniforms that can more easily penetrate Pakistan security cordons in other parts of the country. There is information to suggest that women/men clad in burqas are now part of the mix of attackers. TTP has been clear in its propaganda that these attacks are both in direct retaliation for Pakistan government support for American initiatives in countering violent extremism and because of the military's upcoming Waziristan operation. TTP has gone so far as to promise an end to the attacks and its fighters participation in jihad against India, if the Pakistani government changes its foreign policy and establishes an "Islamic" state. Despite these threats, the Pakistan military continues its preparations for an offensive in South Waziristan against the TTP and their tribal allies to be launched in the next few weeks. End Summary.

¶3. (S) Beginning with the attack against the Askari Bank in Peshawar on September 26, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has resumed its terrorist attacks in Pakistan's settled areas

that had largely ceased following the death of Baitullah Mehsud. TTP's new campaign coincides with Pakistan military preparations for an operation in South Waziristan, including increased air strikes in Mehsud territory and with the consolidation of leadership power within TTP in the hands of an individual referring to himself as Hakeemullah Mehsud.

¶4. (S) TTP and its al-Qaeda allies, who have been providing advice and logistical assistance to the organization in exchange for shelter with the Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan, appear to have timed their renewed spate of attacks and the accompanying propaganda blitz to undermine public confidence in Pakistan security forces just as preparations for the South Waziristan operation were increasing. The terrorists appear to have read in on modern theories of asymmetrical warfare, including the tenet that public support will help determine the outcome of the struggle between government and anti-government actors. General Kayani told us repeatedly that strong public support was a key issue in his decision to move into Swat.

¶5. (S) TTP is not, however, acting alone in carrying out the recent attacks. Al-Qaeda advice, support, and possibly financing have long been a critical element in TTP's ability to carry-out spectacular attacks in Pakistan's settled areas. In addition, TTP has allied on and off with various other Taliban-inspired terrorist and criminal groups in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, including Mengal Bagh and the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi (TNSM).

¶6. (S) In the recent attacks in the Pakistani Punjab, TTP appears to have, as they did in 2008, hired the services of Punjab-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ). LJ, which began as a violent off-shot of Deobandi sectarian extremist group Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) in the 1990s, has steadily increased its target set from strictly Shias, a minority in Pakistan, to any group which does not share its strict, militant interpretation of Islam, including the Pakistan government and western interests. Since 2001, LJ has become essentially a "guns for hire" terrorist organization, prepared to carry out attacks on any non-Deobandi group in exchange for sizable cash payments. The latest attacks are also tied directly to Ilyas Kashmiri, who is affiliated with the anti-India terrorist group Harakat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI). HUJI, along with other anti-India groups including Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), have increasingly shifted their focus to include Pakistan government and western targets in Pakistan and India. They are also actively collaborating with Taliban groups, including TTP, sectarian extremist groups such as LJ, and al-Qaeda.

¶7. (S) The recent attacks demonstrate that TTP and its allied groups are capable of adjusting their tactics and practices to counter Pakistan government security measures. TTP has continued to use vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED) against police and government installations in NWFP -- where counter-measures are comparatively weaker. In Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Lahore, TTP has started deploying single suicide bombers or small teams of suicide bombers and armed gunmen to target high-profile installations. These individual suicide bombers or small teams have begun wearing the uniforms of Pakistani security personnel, which are easily available for purchase in any market and allow them to bypass security screening checkpoints unchallenged. There is information that women/men in burqas have also been part of the mix of attackers. While casualty tolls in these attacks are lower than in the VBIED explosions, their ability to bypass security and penetrate into the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army, international organizations, and the headquarters of the Federal Investigation Agency could have a devastating impact on public and security force morale.

¶8. (S) It is also possible, however, that the terrorists have not accurately assessed all quarters of Pakistani public opinion. Most Punjabis were remarkably nonchalant about violence in the tribal areas prior to the March attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore. Consulate Lahore contacts

have fallen into two camps in reaction to the October 15 (and earlier but also recent) attacks in the Punjab. One camp does, indeed, bemoan the government's incapacity and speaks pessimistically about the GOP's capacity to rally. Another camp speaks passionately of the importance of the GOP's civilian and military components joining to defeat the terrorists, and restore normalcy to Pakistan, with some pride in the GOP's accomplishments to date. The attacks seem to have further invigorated this camp. Both camps insist that the violent extremists represent neither Islam nor Pakistan. Terrorist "messaging" is not having the desired impact in Lahore. Even the anti-U.S., nationalist daily "The Nation" spoke highly of the "martyred" security forces who lost their lives in the October 15 attacks.

¶9. (S) In addition to the increase in attacks, TTP has equally launched a propaganda effort to break public support for the impending operation in South Waziristan. The thrust of this propaganda effort has been that the attacks are in retaliation for the Pakistan Army/government's policy of supporting America's "war against Islam" in Pakistan and Afghanistan. TTP has stressed that any action in Waziristan is being carried out on instructions from the United States.

¶10. (S) TTP spokespeople have promised that the campaign of attacks will end, if the Pakistan government abandons its support of the United States policy. In one recent statement, TTP even offered to send its jihadi forces to Pakistan's eastern border with India if the Pakistan government turned Pakistan into "an Islamic state." Such propaganda messages are clearly designed to damage the army and government's image in the general public and decrease public and political support for what may be a prolonged military operation in South Waziristan.

¶11. (S) Despite these attacks, we continue to receive solid evidence that the Pakistan military is preparing to move forward with some kind of operation in South Waziristan. For the last several days, we have witnessed renewed air strikes in the region designed to prepare the ground to facilitate offensive maneuver. In addition, we have seen continued movements of troops and supplies to tactical assembly areas in South Waziristan and the positioning of Special Services Group (SSG) personnel for reconnaissance activities, which appear imminent. On October 16, Chief of Army Staff Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani made an unscheduled call to ISAF Commander Gen. McChrystal to advise that operations in South Waziristan were imminent and to request that ISAF forces in Afghanistan coordinate with the Pakistani military to prevent the escape of militants across the border. Mission believes that the start of major ground combat operations may still be several days or more away as SSG reconnaissance and additional air strikes are likely prior to the commencement of decisive operations.

¶12. (S) Despite the positive indications that the Pakistan Army intends to move into South Waziristan, post remains uncertain as to the intended extent of the operation. There is no question that the Pakistan Army intends to "punish" the Mehsud tribe for its protection of TTP and to dismantle as much TTP infrastructure in South Waziristan as possible. It is also likely that the Pakistan Army will move against al-Qaeda elements that are inter-mingled with the Mehsud tribe and supporting TTP. It remains to be seen, however, that given the short time frame before a harsh winter sets into the Waziristans that the Pakistan Army is contemplating a full-scale clearance operation. There is no indication that the military intends to go after Commander Nazir, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Haqqani network, or their allied tribes -- all located in North Waziristan -- as part of this operation. These elements that focus almost exclusively on cross-border attacks into Afghanistan are not a high priority for the Pakistan military, and, in the case of the Haqqanis, it is not clear the Pakistani military could achieve a decisive victory even if it wanted to do so.